10.1. COMMUNITY*

Schools are part of the community and to an extent reflect what goes on in communities. While schools might attempt tackling some problems in the community they are very few and far spaced. By and large there is not much that schools can do about community-related issues. However, it is very useful for schools to be aware of these factors so that they can try and accommodate related information into their policy discussions pertaining to school safety. It is also very important for schools to have positive collaborations with various agencies in the community to maintain safe school environments.

This section highlights various aspects of the community like crime, socioeconomic factors, psychosocial factors, interagency collaborative efforts, and media, and their influence on school safety.

Community crime

Any form of crime or violence in the community is bound to have a direct or indirect impact on what happens in schools and is, therefore, very crucial to their safety. Fifty nine percent of the respondents (three bus drivers, one counselor, two heads of security, eight principals, five SROs, and nineteen teachers) discussed community crime in course of the interviews.

Homicides/ killings

Several communities, especially the isolated and depressed ones, experience various forms of homicide. As discussed by several interviewees such incidents play a negative role in children's lives because they grow up observing such violence and are often related to the deceased or are even a part of the crime. One teacher (cell 14) illustrated the point with the help of an example. "*I've had three situations in the last two years. One, where the mother was killed by the father while the kid was right there. Another one where the father ran down the hall shot the mother and shot himself and the kid was in the room right there and saw him. The third one where the kid was in my room and the mother was going over to the house to get some stuff and the father came running out and shot her. I've seen what it's done to the kids, it just destroys a kid*".
On a similar note a principal (cell 13) observed that "*we're not isolated and insolated from all that bad stuff that goes on. We're right in the midst of it and our kids have to put up with a lot of that stuff. I think that's why they really like coming to school because they know it's safe*".

Each time such crime takes place in the community the school feels the impact too. In the words of a teacher (cell 14) "*yesterday we just had a case where the police told us that maybe we should consider a lockdown*" because some body was shot in the neighborhood.

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* See Appendix 2 for cell references in text.

What concerned some respondents was that sometimes students get used to crime in their communities. Getting used to such incidents can change student attitudes towards crime in general and that can be problematic. One teacher (cell 5) shared an instance where violence had taken place in the community but did not get the expected reaction from the students. "*A guy was gunned down by police in the 7-11 parking lot and kids passed his body in the parking lot on their way to school. I thought the kids were going to be totally freaked out. There were kids who were upset because he had lived in an apartment building that was close to here and they knew him. But then that was it, it was over and done with, and it was like just another day*".

Abuse

Abuse in the community can take many forms like domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse, etc. And in many instances children are involved and bring those influences to the school. One principal (cell 7) discussed the presence of *domestic violence* in the community and what schools can do to assist children from such backgrounds. "*There are some things that are going on out there like domestic violence, I think because of the alcohol. I know it exists out there, so what I'm trying to do is to make this a safe school, to make this a place where kids feel wanted, feel like people care about them*".

Child abuse takes place in many communities. According to one teacher's (cell 3) perception, however, child abuse is more common in reservations or rural communities and it is also more accepted. "*On a reservation I think we probably have more cases of child abuse and so on that's probably looked the other way because it's been going on for years*".

Sexual abuse also frequently tends to occur in isolated communities, and often it is school-age kids who are affected. One teacher (cell1) recalled an incident in the community and what concerned the teacher was the acceptance that was displayed by some community members. "*There had been some experimentation with a group of boys among themselves, and what was odd was that it was older kids with younger kids. It was going on and it was happening for a long time. The mom had caught the little boy and was very furious. The only thing that unsettled me about that situation was how it ended up. I remember hearing a comment like, oh well you know, all boys do that, it's so natural*".

Substance abuse

Alcohol and drugs were two of the most frequently discussed problems with respect to substance abuse in various communities. One counselor (cell 3) pointed out that "*we have lost a lot of our community people to alcoholism*".

According to a principal (cell 13) substance abuse is fairly common in many communities. "*I think drugs is one of the things that we see a lot of. I think it was last year, and right across the street they were selling meth right out of a house and they busted them*". Substance abuse in the community influences students to a very large

extent as noted by one SRO (cell 11). "*I know in dealing with the sheriff's department that there are a lot of drug problems out in this area. So it doesn't help the students at all, it actually influences them I think in the drug world because it is out there*".

Gangs and graffiti

Many communities have some gangs that eventually permeate schools. In the event that this happens it becomes very difficult for schools to isolate the problem and solve it because of the constant exposure that students experience outside the school premises. One head of security (cell 6) noted that "*their parents are gang members, they have the tattoos, and their grandparents are gang members. I don't think they're full- fledged gang members yet but they are wannabes. The family is a stronger influence than we are*".

The physical appearance and condition of areas surrounding the school reveals a lot about what goes on within the community. Presence of graffiti might indicate the existence of gangs in the neighborhood and other discipline related problems. One bus driver (cell 8) shared that there exists "*a lot of graffiti and a lot of spray painting on the signs. They had spray painting over at the high school*".

Economics

Some interviewees discussed the mix of crimes that can take place in low-income neighborhoods. One principal (cell 5) observed that if "*you look down the street there is a significant amount of low income housing that lends itself to increased mobility. So that's a problem in itself. Then in the community you also have killings that have gone on over the last few years. You also have substances, poverty to some degree, and the police report to us that this is one of the highest crime rate areas in the city*".
The SRO from the same school shared that "*there's a lot, there's prostitution, there's drugs, there's armed robberies to the business, local businesses around here, there's a lot of homeless walking around the streets, and all right here down the street*".

Another SRO (cell 16) touched upon thefts as a concern in some communities. "*I would say most of our problems are thefts and criminal damage*".

In summary, this section discussed various crimes that take place in communities, which in turn can impact kids in those communities. Homicide, domestic violence, sexual abuse, child abuse, alcohol, drugs, gangs, graffiti, and theft were some of the community crimes discussed by the interviewees.

Community socioeconomic factors

Schools are part of the community and socioeconomic factors in the community can influence the school environment. Seventy two percent of the respondents (one aide, three bus drivers, one counselor, three heads of security, thirteen principals, two SROs, and twenty-three teachers) shared their perceptions on the relationship between school safety and socioeconomic factors in the community.

Economics of the community

The economic condition of the community goes a long way in determining the kind of issues that are faced both by the community and the school. Poverty, unemployment, and low-income housing could determine the community's attitude towards education and crime. One teacher (cell 2) discussed that their community is "*a mining community where the mines are slowing closing. So there is a lot of dynamics there that you don't have everywhere else, unemployment rates, transient population that's forced by mine closures, and also a different attitude towards education than you find in this community*".

Another teacher (cell 15) perceived that there was a definite correlation between the presence of gangs in their community and the existence of the local prison. "*The prison has had a direct influence on the rise of gang activity. Simply because of people who've moved into our community because they have somebody in prison. I think if the young people go to prison and get involved in a gang situation they bring that back to their community when they come out regardless of where they go. And I think building the prison here has been a great economic boom in a lot of ways but I don't think it's really been necessarily good for our community*".

Socioeconomic status of the community

Children from both low and high socioeconomic status (SES) deal with safety related issues, based on what they have experienced in their environments. While poor kids might act out more or be more organized, rich kids are also involved in incidents, although they might not be as organized. One head of security (cell 6) commented that "*we have the middle class, upper middle class, the wealthy kids here that tend to group together and get in trouble. You could call them a gang just as much, if not more. They probably do more damage to the community than the groups with poorer kids. They are organized and the wealthier kids are not. The poorer kids will flaunt it a little bit more and maybe not be as smart about it. The wealthier kids have parties that parents have no idea of*".
On the same lines a principal (cell 6) shared that "*I personally believe that if the student's experience in their past has been one where they possibly would have been bullied, threatened, intimidated, either within their family or their home, then that's just going to come with them. I think that transcends genders, races, and economic backgrounds*".

Both low and high SES communities have domestic abuse and substance abuse. However, the lower SES population tends to have more of these problems. One principal (cell 1) perceived that " *when you have many people that are low income and don't have the education, I think that you get a lot of drinking that probably goes on at home. We have had some abuse cases over the years, and now I'm thinking mainly of sexual abuse, and the majority of that though was with Anglos*".

According to some interviewees when domestic abuse and fights take place in the community the low SES populations often lack appropriate coping mechanisms. Such

attitudes may have tendencies to be extended to schools also. One principal (cell 14) perceived that "*the families of poverty have lower thresholds and they have a tendency to resolve their differences through physical conflict. I don't believe that it has anything to do with particular families or particular cultures, but I believe it is more of class issue. I see that poorer families don't have as many of those coping skills that we would see in the middle class or your upper middle class families*".

Another issue mentioned by the interviewees was that the low SES populations have other important priorities besides education because they have to deal with basic survival issues on a regular basis. One teacher (cell 4) observed that "*it's not that families struggling economically don't love their children or don't care about them. It's just that they don't have time for niceties, they're trying to make sure that they have enough to eat, a place to sleep, they are just taking to take care of the basics. Consequently, the kids come to school totally undisciplined, they have no clue as to how they should properly behave, and their language many times is very minimal. Those are things that I worry about most*".

Community growth

The nature of safety related issues start to evolve as communities grow and change. One principal (cell 2) commented that "*I think it's due because we're so small and we're still somewhat rural. But it remains to be seen what happens in the future when we get eight hundred kids on this campus and we're not rural. I think some of those issues will probably catch up with us*".

Isolation factors

Isolated communities breed their own unique problems and they are in turn carried into schools by the schools. One teacher (cell 1) noted that " *I think it's a big danger when you have kids that are isolated because parents are out working hard in the fields, have long hours, and are tired*".

Rural or secluded communities and reservations are isolated and they often have high-risk students enrolled in their schools. Very often the kids are a lot safer in the school than in the community itself. One teacher (cell 9) stated that " *most of our problems are outside our school and sometimes they get brought into the school. But I think this school is an area where the kids feel safer, they feel safer here than they do out in the community*".
According to one principal (cell 3) "*There are not really any strong community activities that happen for the kids at all after school. We rate our kids each year at different levels of risk. By the time you get to the 8th grade we probably have about seventy or eighty percent of our kids at some form or another of being at risk. The majority of our kids do not live with both their mother and father. A lot of them live with other adults besides their parents*".

Physical location of the school

The location of the school has an important influence on the kinds of crimes that can take place in the school. For example, schools might be situated amidst communities that have a lot of graffiti and various kinds of crimes. One principal (cell 14) discussed that " *the general issues that are around the community are issues of graffiti which is beginning to be more prevalent in the washes, dumpsters, alleyways, and a set of buildings. Kids running around late at night, curfew violations, trespassing, and burglary. Which is typical I think for a suburban community like ours. Sometimes we see those issues being manifested here the following day as a result of cruising, kids come into conflict and then it ends up spilling over here*".

In summary, this section discussed perceptions on the impact of community socioeconomic factors on school climate. The economics and SES of the community, community growth, isolation factors, and physical location of the school were some of the topics that were discussed in course of the interviews.

Community psychosocial factors

There are several community psychosocial factors that can impact student behavior and student violence in schools. Some of these factors could be abuse, dysfunctional family environments, negative reinforcements from the community etc. Thirty three percent of the respondents (two counselors, six principals, two SROs, and eleven teachers) revealed such situations with respect to their schools.

Abuse

Abuse in the home and community can take the form of verbal and physical abuse, where the latter could include sexual abuse and rape. These forms of abuse leave very deep scars in the students' lives and can cause various behavioral problems also. The interviewees shared many such examples. One teacher (cell 14) shared that "*When I look at my thirty kids, fifteen are from single parent homes which is fifty percent. Ten of them are abused so that means twenty aren't. But ten of them are abused, physically, sexually or verbally. When you look at statistics like that you wonder about the five good kids that show up, how well they really are with what's going on. I don't think a lot of people understand that*".

As revealed by a principal (cell 3) such statistics can be appallingly high in some isolated communities and can place students at risk. "*I don't know the numbers but it would probably be around thirty or forty percent of our kids, at one time or another through their k-8 experience, have had something like that happen to them*". In the words of a teacher (cell 2) "*I have two kids in my class who were sexually abused by the time they were seven years old. I am just amazed at how many things these kids have been through. Just life experiences. Not so much like safety, danger things, but just life*".

One principal (cell 4) was very concerned with who gets custody to sign out kids when they are at school because such arrangements have a potential for abuse as well. The principal shared an instance where the arrangement was being abused by an adult during school hours and the school had no way of knowing what was going on till the parent brought it to their attention. "*I've had a 7th grader that was raped by her older sister's husband. The mother comes in and says at a conference that one of the problems is that her daughter missing too much school, especially in the afternoon. She's being checked out at noon everyday. The individual who's been checking her out was on the list to have authority to check her out. She was getting home at the regular time everyday, she would show up at the bus stop the time she's suppose to get off the bus. But during the afternoon they were having their rendezvous*".

While such instances of abuse are very concerning to teachers and the staff alike, there have been instances where they have preferred to look the other way instead of reporting the incidents and getting involved and/ or accused. One teacher (cell 3) illustrated the same. "*I heard that a teacher reported that a kid was being molested and then the parents went back and accused the teacher that the teacher was doing it. So, after that episode I think there was a real mix-up down there and I don't know how it ever ended up. But I think a lot of teachers were kind of scared to ever report anything. So it seems like a lot of people have looked the other way and it's been going on and on*".

Suicide

Some communities, especially isolated communities, have a higher incidence of suicide than others. One teacher (cell 9) shared a grave concern for this problem because it influences school age children. "*Part of the problem is in this culture, more so than in other cultures, it tends to get glorified with great outpourings of grief, emotion, sadness and big showy funerals. A lot of times these kids that commit suicide get all the love and attention in death that they never got when they were alive, and so the other kid who's neglected and didn't get any attention sees this and feels encouraged. In fact, when you see that, you don't start wondering why the ones who kill themselves do, you wonder why more don't*".

Dysfunctional situations

Kids from dysfunctional backgrounds lend themselves more to risk. One counselor (cell 12) stated concerns regarding dysfunctional situations that the students are exposed to on a regular basis. "*We have kids who live in homes where there is domestic violence, we have kids who are living with single parents as a result of divorce, we have kids who are living in homes where the parents are using drugs, and the parents condone drug use with the student. So we have the typical array of dysfunctional at risk home life situations going on*".
A teacher (cell 2) discussed student preference for jail in instances where they come from dysfunctional situations. "*The problem is what do you do when you come from a dysfunctional family. Prison is a step up. That's what happens with a great deal of kids*

that come from very troubled home lives, they figure that they're going to jail anyway, prison is a step up".

Negative reinforcement

The family and community have a very strong influence on kids. They can promote positive behaviors if they are in a position to reinforce the same. On the other hand, many families and communities end up reinforcing negative behavior in children and those are very difficult to deal with. One principal (cell 5) commented on how students observe the negativity in their communities. "*This is a very tough area and the kids see things going on all the time. It's a very difficult area for a student to grow up in I think and some of it spills over into the school in terms of what the kids see and do on the campus*". This is because the children pick their role models from these environments and follow them.

One principal (cell 3) remarked that "*part of our problem out here is it's self-perpetuating, it's the role models and the people and how they've grown up. They know that there are other things out there to do but this is all they've experienced and they just fall into the same rut that's been going on*". For example, in male dominated communities the female students have a tendency to accept abuse just because it is common in their communities. One teacher (cell 9) illustrated the same. "*This is a very traditional male dominated society and we see a lot of that here at school. While there are many consensual relationships there are also some that are not. The girl doesn't have a whole lot of say in the matter, and because mom gets beaten at home the girl doesn't see herself as having any options. It's a big problem for us because a lot of our girls don't think it's a problem*".

In summary, this section discussed how schools become a reflection of the various psychosocial problems that exists within families and communities. Abuse, suicide, dysfunctional situations, and negative reinforcements were some of the traits that were discussed. The negative impact that the community can have on children can be amply summed up in the words of a teacher (cell 15). "*They bring such a negative attitude with them to school and they feel like they are a failure*".

Community collaborations

Various collaborative efforts exist between schools and different agencies in communities to maintain safe school environments. Forty five percent of the respondents (one head of security, fifteen principals, one SRO, and twelve teachers) shared their opinions on collaborative efforts between their schools and communities.

School only one element

While most interviewees agreed that schools today have numerous safety-related issues at various levels they were also conscious of the fact that schools are only one element of the community where such issues are couched. In other words, schools are not solely responsible for any safety problems and can certainly not solve them on their own

without any collaboration with the community. One principal (cell 6) noted that "*it's such a bigger issue than just what goes on in the school. They keep focusing on the schools, which I understand, but it's really a society issue. So maybe if they could broaden their perspective of violence and where it comes from, or really starts, schools are just the places where it gets acted out and gets recorded*".

One teacher (cell 2) agreed with this view. "*I always wonder about trying to build these values here but it still takes a village. Schools are put in a very unfair situation if you say we are responsible for changing these kids. We can only be an element that tries to teach a lot of the social values but if those aren't' reinforced at home then you've got a problem, a societal problem at best*".

As a suggestion for joint responsibility, another teacher (cell 7) perceived that "*responsibility is 1/3rd teachers, 1/3rd the parents, and 1/3rd the students. You got to have those three to work with each other*".

After-school activities

After-school activities are very essential for students, especially in remote areas like reservations, in order to keep them occupied after school and away from trouble. In the words of one teacher (cell 9) "*our kids need more to do outside of the school, whether it be organizations, whether it be youth centers. I think they need things outside of themselves and outside of the school to occupy their time so they don't have the time or the inclination to indulge in inappropriate behaviors*".

On the same lines one principal (cell 9) commented that "*out here on the reservation there's nothing else for them to do. It's either school or home, there's no place to go, there's nothing*".

Another principal (cell 3) added "*there needs to be a lot more activities after school. When you're in a large city the city provides a lot of after-school activities and they'll work in conjunction with the schools*". However, such arrangements are very difficult to come by in rural or remote areas.

One principal (cell 8) provided some examples of the kinds of after-school activities that can be explored. "*I'm working with the city right now to write a grant. We want to try to get many things, drama, photography, etc., which the grant will support. There's not enough for the kids out in the community. This school to me is a community school, it's not my school*".

While many schools are struggling to provide their students with options for after-school activities, it is disturbing also that there are many students who do not have the inclination and/ or time to make use of such opportunities. One principal (cell 7) observed that "*that is an area we can improve on greatly. I know our community tries to do some activities after school and on weekends for students. But there is a certain population of our students that just has no interest in any of that. If at all they are interested, it's usually in a place for them to meet their buddies to continue smoking or whatever it is they do. It maybe a lack of interest or family obligations or even the fact that many students live out of town and log in many miles a day of traveling*".

Community activities

Community activities can take various forms like youth organizations, neighborhood associations, etc. Many interviewees touched on most of these in course of the interviews. One principal (cell 13) mentioned a very important aspect of collaboration. According to the principal it is sometimes essential for schools to make the first move and approach the community in order to give them a feeling of comfort. "*The thing that we have to do is we have to go into their community and we have to develop some rapport with the people by having meetings in churches or in civic buildings. We need to do a better job of being out in the community so that people that don't feel comfortable, and who didn't have a positive experience in school feel comfortable and can express concerns*".

Collaborations with neighborhood associations can also be very useful in keeping schools safe as stated by one principal (cell 14). "*There's a very active neighborhood association here. If they notice that there's an increase in graffiti or hate crime, they pass that along to us. And we inform them if we feel that there are some things that we're noticing that has to be coming from the community*".

Another principal (cell 10) summed up the positive benefits that can result from student involvement in the community. "*Here at the school we put on a police and firemen appreciation luncheon every year and invite all the local firemen and policemen and the kids entertain them. We go out into the community and do community service as well because I think it helps a little bit too. If you're out there in the community helping little old ladies get their yard cleaned up or work for shelters and things like that, those things help. We call it a whole person learning approach. We feel if any piece of that is missing then you're missing the whole person. And we're not just an academic institution, we're trying to do more than that*".

One principal (cell 3) discussed the benefit of youth organizations in working with students at risk in schools. "*Right now we're working with the reservation's division of youth services and they're working particularly with kids that are at risk and help them cope and do different things. However, they work post-facto and are not preventative*".

Services

Police

Collaboration with law enforcement agencies, and the police, was viewed among the most significant by various interviewees with respect to school safety. One principal (cell 3) commented on the close ties the school has with the police. "*We have fairly close ties with the police and we keep in close contact with them about things that we are seeing and they keep us tuned to what they are seeing in the community*". However, it can become problematic to have such collaboration in some remote areas. One principal (cell 11) commented that "*we don't have local law enforcement here and so all of our law enforcement comes through he county*" which can be both time consuming and cumbersome.

An added advantage emerges when the police are in a position to spend more time at schools and be visible to the students as SROs. One principal (cell 16) stated that "*we do have a really good relationship with the police in town and we have for years. And now we also have a Student Resource Officer who is on campus*".

One head of security (cell 9) discussed how effective collaboration with the police has been in reducing hate crime kinds of issues. "*The hate is still there but it has been prevented from going any further. The tribal police, the tribal courts, and the tribal government are all involved in helping these problems and preventing them*".

In the words of a principal (cell 15) collaborative efforts from the state have been successful with respect to law enforcement and school safety. "*One of the best things the state did in the last few years was the emergency management. I'd love to see it mandated where the local authorities, the police, the fire department, etc., have to sit down with the school, because our issues are so related, and we need to work on the issues together*".

Child Protective Services (CPS)

Given the nature of incidents that can occur in schools, many of them need to collaborate very closely with the CPS. One teacher (cell 2) pointed out the need for adequate resources in order to keep such options accessible to children in need. "*We had a kid once who was being raised by his eighteen year old cousin and we couldn't get Child Protective Services to do anything for him. They need to fund more money into programs like Child Protective Services and Foster Care Programs to get better treatment and get better people in those programs. So it's not just a school related issue, it takes the whole village*".

Health Services

Collaborations with health services and with other similar social services were deemed essential for communities by various interviewees. Such collaborations do impact school children within communities, both directly and indirectly. In the words of one principal (cell 3) "*I would like to see a situation where, especially in isolated areas, we can combine medical and social services and all of those kind of things. All within the district in one area where the community is able to get that kind of help. And then I think you'd be able to have a much more united impact in working with a lot of the problems that are out there*".

In summary, this section discussed the value of community collaboration in the effort to maintain safe schools. After-school programs, youth organizations, neighborhood associations, law enforcement, CPS, mental health and other related services were some of the topics discussed by the various interviewees. In addition, many interviewees agreed that school is just one element in the discussion and any meaningful solutions will have to be collaborative in nature.

Television, media and student behavior

The interviewees were asked to discuss the impact that television, movies, peers, and media have, or could potentially have, on student behaviors and school safety issues. They were also asked to highlight their perceptions on the media's reactions to issues related to school violence. Information was shared by twenty two percent of the respondents (seven principals, four teachers, one bus driver, one head of security, and one SRO).

Television, Movies, Peers

What students learn from their peers and from the media has a very important role to play in their behaviors at school. In discussing the impact of TV on student behaviors, one bus driver (cell 7) perceived that "*children get the ideas probably from television and newscasts, sort of a copycat type of things of what goes down in the valley, they pretty much do up here.*"

One head of security (cell 14) shared a similar sentiment. "*It depends on the movies that are out, television programs that are out, and what they're making fun of and what seems to click with the kids. If there happens to be a bad kind of a movie out or a hate crime type movie you'll start seeing maybe a little bit of graffiti relating to that*".

According to a teacher (cell 5) "*the sport of choice by so many of the kids in this school and their families is wrestling. I say you need to stop playing around like that because that's what they're doing. Kids get hurt playing around and they say we just saw this on TV last night*".

Peers can also have a very deep impact on student behavior, especially if the students interact more with peers and less with family members. In the words of an SRO (cell 5) "*they see their friends doing it. If they can't communicate with their family at home if they try to talk to them and they're jut talked at and not with, then they go to their friends. And of course their friends are going to talk to them and then they're going to just agree with each other and then that's where things spiral*".

Media

Schools tended to have very mixed reactions to their relationship with the media, especially schools that have had criminal incidents occur. A principal (cell 6) shared concerns regarding the media because "*the media needs a story, so you got to tell them. You have to tell them about the positive stories. They're really quick to jump on any negative information that's out there, that is a challenge*".

Another principal (cell 15) shared a similar sentiment, especially with regard to media interaction and what they choose to focus on. "*The media is trying to sell the story, so they're looking for sensationalism, and my experience with the media has not been good. The fact is that the media does not want to deal with data. They want to deal with emotions*".

The principal went on to share the experience of the school. "*Our advice was not to talk to the media. As a result the media would find anybody and they'd ask them what's going on, and these people had no idea what was going on, but they gave them an opinion and the media put it into the paper, or into TV. I think as schools we need to know how to deal with the media more and to try to share information with the media*".

One principal (cell 14) highlighted the school's interaction with the press, both with regard to hurdles and support from them. The principal expressed that "*we talk to them whenever they want to talk and we tell the truth, and we answer their questions. Sometimes we think they don't do a good job, but it's really difficult to argue with the press because they're in front of the camera everyday, and so it doesn't benefit the administrator to have a running battle with the press because you always lose. We do have issues of being forthright and honest and to make sure that we're putting the best light and that we're explaining things as they happen and at the same time protecting student rights and they understand that. I have to say they've been fair, I haven't liked everything they did or said about our school but you know it's my problem*".

Media and confidentiality

The issue of student confidentiality tends to be most crucial, especially with respect to the media. The issues surrounding confidentiality were discussed by a principal (cell 7). "*I have a lot of discipline information on students, and I don't feel comfortable releasing that information to them. I don't feel like discussing that information in a public setting and that's important to me. And so we have to respond in very general terms and of course that sometimes doesn't wash well with somebody who wants to find specific answers and I just kind of have to say well I'm sorry that's a confidential matter*".

In summary, this section discussed the impact that TV, movies, and peers have on student behavior. Problems encountered with the media and issues pertaining to student confidentiality were also highlighted.

This concludes this section on community influence on school safety. The following section discusses perceptions pertaining to parental factors and their impact on school safety.